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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000480

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SA/INS  
LONDON FOR POL/ERIEDEL  
NSC FOR MILLARD

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TAGS: [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [NE](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL'S CEASE-FIRE: HINTS OF MAOIST STRATEGY FROM  
THE MIDWEST

REF: A. A. KATHMANDU 312

[1](#)B. B. KATHMANDU 477

Classified By: DCM Robert K. Boggs for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

Summary  
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[1](#)1. (SBU) Econoff visited Nepalgunj and Jumla districts of midwestern Nepal from March 4 to 7 to assess the effects of the cease-fire. Despite statements from the Maoists at the national level (Ref A), insurgents in the Midwest Development Region are still using rhetoric calling for the establishment of a communist republic, the dissolution of the Royal Nepalese Army, and elimination of the constitutional monarchy. Despite the cease-fire, Maoists continue to hold mass meetings, extort funds, and carry weapons in the midwest. The activities of the Maoists in rural parts of the country raise serious questions regarding the sustainability of the cease-fire and the success of future negotiations. (Note: This is the second in a series of reports on this recent trip. See Ref B for first report.) End summary.

Away from the Center, Maoist Rhetoric Differs  
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[1](#)2. (C) Econoff visited Nepalgunj and Jumla districts of midwestern Nepal from March 4 to 7 to assess the effects of the cease-fire. According to a number of reliable sources, including businessmen, politicians, government officials, social activists, and local residents, the Maoists in the Midwest Development Region, often called the Maoist heartland, made strikingly different statements from those of the Maoist leadership. For example, during preliminary negotiations in Kathmandu, the Maoists have indicated that they are willing to support the principles of multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy (Ref A). However, Rajendra Mohat, Jumla Local Representative of the non-governmental organization (NGO) INSEC, summarized the insurgents' objectives, as expressed to him by local Maoists, as:

- 1. Secure the leadership of Baburam Bhattarai, head of the Maoist negotiating team and the Maoists' number two ideologue, in a constituent assembly;
- 2. Use Maoist leadership of the constituent assembly to transform Nepal into a communist republic;
- 3. Dissolve the Royal Nepal Army and re-establish the national armed forces on the Maoist militia model; and
- 4. Offer the King a position of respect "without facilities," meaning a title without authority, budget, or official residence.

Is the Cease-Fire a Tactic?  
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[1](#)3. (C) Most government officers without regular, direct interaction with the Maoists had similar impressions of Maoist intent. Dilli Raj Joshi, Chief District Officer of Banke, the midwest's economic center, stated that negotiations were doomed to fail as the Maoists had not given up their main objective of attaining power by building a communist republic. The Senior Superintendent of Police in Jumla, Madan Khadka, also learned through his sources that the Maoists at the grass-roots level are continuing to call for a republic. He surmises that Maoist-Government negotiations at the national level are a tactic to buy time. It is the consensus of both police and government officers in Jumla that it is only a matter of time before the cease-fire collapses and Jumla will be one of the first sites attacked again.

[1](#)4. (C) During econoff's visit, only Him Gurung, Deputy Inspector General of Police for the region in Nepalgunj, was optimistic about the prospects for the peace process. He opined that the Maoists have exhausted themselves and now must return to the political process. He believes that the Maoists have eroded their public support and must use coercion to maintain their political base. Other interlocutors echoed his perception that the Maoists were exhausted, due to various causes, e.g., increased Indian

security along the border, Maoist losses incurred in November, and pressure from the international community. However, Gurung's belief that the Maoists can muster support only through the threat of force was not repeated by other sources.

Talking Peace, Maintaining Force

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15. (C) The Maoists continue to hold mass meetings, extort funds, and openly carry weapons in Jumla. Three major trails from the north, west and east enter the district headquarters (there are no motorable roads). On all of these axes, the Maoists continue to demonstrate their strength. According to Jumla's Police and INSEC Representative, the Maoists have massed several hundred cadres with weapons, including explosives, three hours to the west in Tatopani. Villagers coming to the district headquarters to buy government rice report that Maoists have established a gate and a bridge two kilometers east of Jumla. The villagers added that the Maoists had stopped harassing them since the beginning of the cease-fire. In Sinja, one day's walk to the north, Major Khanal, the Company Commander of the local Royal Nepal Army garrison, stated that the Maoists had recently held a mass meeting with weapons. During his visit, econoff observed Maoist flags surrounding the district headquarters. The flags had been planted on the anniversary of the launching of the Maoist "People's War" (February 13) and, according to local residents, demarcate Maoist-controlled territory.

Comment

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16. (C) The information gathered on this recent trip exposes some glaring differences in Maoist rhetoric at the national and local levels. This inconsistency reinforces the suspicion of many at senior levels of Nepal's security forces that the cease-fire is a Maoist tactic to buy time and attempt to achieve revolutionary goals through manipulation of the fractious political setup at the center. The insurgents' ambitious objectives, as described by INSEC's local representative, present some difficult negotiating challenges--if not obstacles--for the Nepali government. Any delay or refusal to accede on the part of the government could serve as a pretext for the Maoists to call an end to the cease-fire.

MALINOWSKI